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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002864

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: TIMELINE IF NEW ELECTIONS CALLED

REF: A. 05 ANKARA 6878

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2804

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Parliamentary elections in Turkey are constitutionally mandated to be held at least once every five years. No legislative term has lasted the full five years since 1980. Current political debate centers in part on whether or not early elections will be called before their scheduled date in November 2007 (reftels). In practice, it takes three to four months from the time the parliament or president triggers elections to the actual election date. While by-elections may not be held within one year of scheduled general elections, there is no such restriction on calling early general elections. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Under the Turkish Constitution, general parliamentary elections can be held under three conditions:

- At the expiration of the constitutionally-mandated five-year legislative term;
- When the parliament votes to hold early elections; or
- When the president, under limited circumstances, calls for early elections.

When Parliament Triggers Elections

[1](#)3. (U) For parliament to take action, either a draft law announcing an election date or such language attached to another draft law must be introduced. Either the government or opposition can introduce the legislation. Passage of the draft law requires that (a) a quorum of one third of the parliament (184 out of 550 seats) be present to begin the session, and (b) one-fourth of the parliament vote in favor (138 out of 550 seats).

When the President Triggers Elections

[1](#)4. (U) The president, after consulting with the parliament speaker, can take an early election decision under only the

following five circumstances:

-- If a government cannot be formed within 45 days of a general election;

-- If a government cannot be formed within 45 days of the resignation of the prime minister;

-- If a government falls following a vote of no confidence and a new government cannot be established or fails to win a vote of confidence within 45 days. (A vote of no confidence requires a quorum of 184 to begin the session; but a majority of all members of parliament must then vote in favor - 226 out of 550 votes);

-- If the prime minister asks for a vote of confidence, the request to hold such a vote is turned down by an absolute majority vote of all members (226 out of 550 votes) and a government cannot be formed within 45 days;

-- If a newly formed government cannot win a vote of confidence.

15. (U) The constitution and electoral law do not specify a timeline that must be followed once elections are called. The Supreme Elections Board (SEB), a body of 11 judges, publishes an elections calendar that specifies several procedures with deadlines, such as finalizing candidate lists, publicizing voters lists, printing the ballot papers and the official campaign period. According to past experience, approximately three to four months elapse between an election call and election day. In 2002, for example, the elections calendar, published one week after early elections were called, covered a three-month period, from August 7 to November 3, 2002.

By-Elections

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16. (U) By-elections are called when 5 percent of the seats in parliament (26 seats) are vacated or if a province no longer has parliamentary representation. Elections must be held within three months of this occurrence. By-elections may not/not be held within one year of scheduled general elections. No such restriction is placed on general elections, which may be called at any time.

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